


Job Placement 101 for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Counselors

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A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner consisting of several concentric circles of varying sizes and shades of gray, resembling ripples in water.

Unique Issues of Individuals with a Substance Abuse Disability

- Lack of stable employment history
- Underemployment
- Inability to return to prior employment
- Gaps in employment
- Lack of references
- Disrupted career plans

Unique Issues of Individuals with a Substance Abuse Disability

- Possible stigma or label as an addict
- Lack of education or training
- Inability to work in certain “trigger” environments
- Legal history, with implications for bonding, licensing, insurance
- Disclosure issues

A strong positive correlation has been found between employment and abstinence from substance abuse after successful treatment.



Benefits of Work

- Material Benefits
- Psychological benefits
 - Self-concept
 - Self-esteem
 - Connectedness
 - Objective structure
- Societal Value

Self-Exploration



Eagerness vs. Readiness to Work

“All I need is a job”



Robertson, 2003

Eagerness vs. Readiness to Work

- Underestimating Impact of Substance Abuse
- Old Patterns Emerging During Vocational Placement Process

Readiness to Work Assessment

- Vocational Identity
- Vocational Skills
- Education
- Employment
- Activities of Daily Living
- Psycho/Social/Spiritual Values

Disability Issues

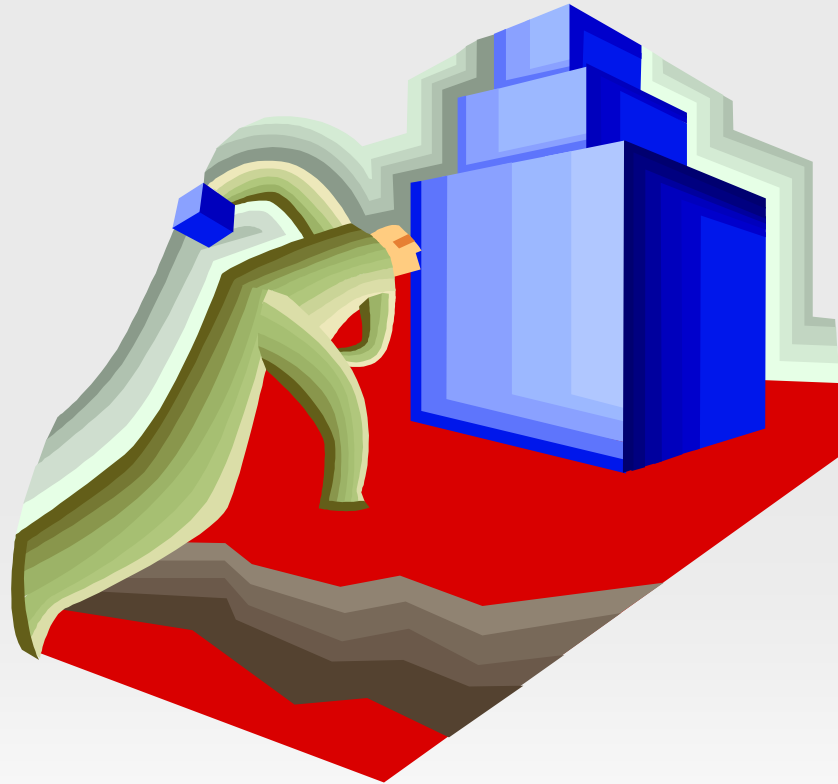
- Drug-Free Workplace Act
- Functional Limitations
- Co-Existing Disability
- Disability Disclosure
- Discrimination

Motivation

How can the counselor maintain the person's motivation to work, while helping the person through the preparation for work?



Exploration of the World of Work



Characteristics of Work Environment

- Non Structured
 - informal hiring practices
 - low skill demand
 - high anonymity
 - low career investment
 - job expectations may be ambiguous
 - less constraints to inhibit drugs and alcohol use

Characteristics of Work Environment

➤ Structured

- formal hiring practices
- high skill demands
- specified rules and regulations
- high expectations of performance
- measurable performance standards
- intolerance of antisocial behavior
- employee accountability
- minimal unsupervised time
- negative consequences for substance abuse

Supports

- Employee Assistance Programs
- Job Seeking Skills Training Programs
- Supported/Transitional Employment
- Peer Self-Help Groups
- Rehabilitation Counselors

Placement Planning

- Individualized
- Client Involvement
- Work Goals
- Common Elements
 - Job Targets
 - Geographical Boundaries
 - Salary/Wage Expectations
 - Counselor Responsibility
 - Client Responsibility